Sub B1

We claim:

1. A method of converting text to speech comprising:

receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix;

for each textual unit,

locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein one said textual unit in said list is indicated as not having an associated speech sample in memory and said method further comprises:

passing said indicated textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;

receiving a speech sample converted from said indicated textual unit from said secondary text to speech engine; and

appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein each said speech sample in said memory comprises a processed recording of a voice talent and said secondary text to speech engine comprises a phonetic text to speech engine based on said voice talent.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein a consecutive plurality of said textual units in said list represent a whole word, said method further comprising:

for each textual unit in said consecutive plurality of said textual units, locating an associated speech sample in said memory;

creating a speech unit by splicing together said plurality of associated speech samples; and

appending said speech unit to said output signal.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising, after said splicing, processing said speech unit to remove discontinuities.

6. A method of pre-processing a text file comprising:

receiving a text file;

parsing said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix; and

for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units corresponds to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, adding said stored textual unit to a list.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising, for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units does not correspond to one of said stored textual units,

marking said parsed textual unit as being out of vocabulary; and

adding said marked textual unit to said list.

8. The method of claim 7 where said marking comprises pre-pending a character to said textual unit.

9. A text to speech converter comprising:

means for receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix;

for each textual unit,

means for locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

means for appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

10. A text to speech converter comprising a processor operable to:

receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix;

for each textual unit,

locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

11. A computer readable medium for providing program control to a processor, said processor included in a text to speech converter, said computer readable medium adapting said processor to be operable to:

receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix;

for each textual unit,

locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

12. A text to speech conversion system comprising:

a text file pre-processor operable to:

receive a text file;

parse said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix; and

for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units corresponds to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, add said stored textual unit to a list;

and a textual unit processor operable to:

receive said list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix;

for each textual unit, of said list:

locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

13. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising a textual unit and a speech sample associated with said textual unit, where said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix.

14. A data structure including a field for a textual unit and a field for a speech sample associated with said textual unit, where said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a suffix.